UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA LIBRARY
0 0002 1508 858

Ex libris
universitatis
albertaeasis

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR. Grace Marie Swampy

TITLE OF PROJECT. The Role of Native Women in a Plains Cree Society (and) Learning the Cree Language--A Grammar

DEGREE FOR WHICH PROJECT WAS PRESENTED. Master of Education

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED. 1981

Permission is hereby granted to THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA LIBRARY to reproduce single copies of this project and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the project nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's consent and written permission.

D

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE ROLE OF NATIVE WOMEN IN A PLAINS CREE SOCIETY

and

LEARNING THE CREE LANGUAGE--A GRAMMAR

by

GRACE MARIE SWAMPY

A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF EDUCATION IN INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION

EDMONTON, ALBERTA Fall 1981

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Department of Educational Foundations for acceptance, a two-part project, entitled "The Role of Native Women In a Plains Cree Society," and "Learning the Cree Language--A Grammar," submitted by Grace Marie Swampy in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Intercultural Education.

ABSTRACT

The requirements for the Master of Education degree, non-thesis route, in Intercultural Education include two major papers. This project comprises a research project, "The Role of Native Women in a Plains Cree Society," and "Learning the Cree Language--A Grammar."

The Role of Native Women in a Plains Cree Society.--The acculturation model has been the predominant explanation for "culture loss" of Amerindian groups. It presupposes that powerful agents of socialization such as schools, mass media, and so forth function to replace traditional values with those of the dominant culture. In this study sixteen Cree-speaking women from one Plains Cree community were interviewed to find how they perceived their traditional roles as women. This collection of ideal role definitions was compared to a classic ethnography of the Plains Cree and to the definition of the Cree woman's role provided by two respected Cree elders. The elders' definitions were assumed to be authoritative. It was found that all sixteen women were consistent in appealing to traditional values to define their roles, though they range in age from 15 to 93, and though their life experiences and educational levels differ. It is therefore assumed that insofar as the role of women is concerned, the forces of acculturation are not nearly as strong as the literature would indicate.

Learning the Cree Language--A Grammar.--The first nine lessons, or Unit I, of the author's pedagogical grammar are included here as the second major project, in partial fulfillment of requirement for the degree.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people whose direction and assistance I wish to acknowledge, but I shall do so personally.

In this document I want to acknowledge the guidance and support given me by my father, Magnus Swampy.

Table of Contents

Chapter — Page

I. Introduction 1

A. Cultural Belief, Determinant of Behaviour 1

B. Definition of the Present Study 3

C. Limitations 4

D. Methodology 5

II. Historical Background 10

A. Ethnographic Accounts of the Origin of the Plains Cree 10

B. A Short History of Hobbema 19

C. The History of the Plains Cree, Plains Cree Version 22

D. Native Education History of Hobbema 23

III. The Elders 28

IV. The Women 35

A. Summary 35

B. The Women and Their Roles 38

V. Discussion 49

A. Conclusions 51

B. Implication 51

VI. Tables 53

VII. Bibliography 57

VIII. Appendix 58

*

LEARNING THE CREE LANGUAGE..... 68

List of Tables

Table		Page
VI.1	List of Women By Age	53
VI.2	Age Distribution and Assessment of Cree Knowledge	54
VI.3	Education, Religious Affiliation, Career and Travel Experience	55
VI.4	Marriage Age and Choice, Number of Children	56

I. Introduction

A. Cultural Belief, Determinant of Behaviour

> Culture is one fact of human life. It is a way of thinking, feeling, and believing. Culture is the part of life which is learned by people as a result of belonging to some particular group (Kluckhohn, 1960, p.25).

Literature concerned with native people rarely deals with culture and behaviour from the natives' own point of view. Such description is not the object of ethnography, but ethnographic accounts by anthropologists are often assumed to be the only reliable sources for information. This study is not ethnographic.

Despite government acculturation policies and the complicity--often through disinterest--of most of the rest of society in these policies, the foundation for social, physical and emotional life for native people is the system of traditional beliefs.

The purpose of this project is to document the existence (or persistence) of traditional beliefs as they affect the definition of the role of women in a group of eighteen Plains Cree women.

In the Plains Cree society there is a definite difference in expectation of behaviour according to sex and different stages in growth from child to adult. The word adult here is not the legal definition, but rather,

according to Cree cultural principles, defines a stage of growth determined by achievement of the individual; for some, adulthood might be achieved at the age of nine years. The cultural belief system sets a definite distinction of role demands on both the male and female members in the Plains Cree society. In a belief system the most important factor is knowledge; knowledge that allows the individual to learn about his or her existence through the customs and practices that exist within his culture. It is the knowledge within the belief system that determines the behaviour of individuals.

There has been a very definite persistence of traditional value learning through generations of the Plains Cree people, a persistence that has been maintained through oral teachings. In the Plains Cree society, female members are taught from early childhood the many customs and practices that mold each person's personality, a personality that usually reflects the individual's native name by which one is known until death.

One might suspect that the declining use of the Cree language by younger people might affect the persistence of traditional definitions of females' roles. Another supposition might be that younger women are affected by increasing pressures toward conformity with non-native values. The theoretical motivations for these questions are not dealt with in this study, because to do so would be to address the theoretical question, rather than to document.

The purpose of this study is documentary, so the theoretical basis for acculturation theory is neither countered nor substantiated. Rather, some questions are addressed which come from the above discussion. What are the traditional definitions of women's role? What kind of uniformity exists between older and younger women? What kind of differences are there between older and younger women?

B. Definition of the Present Study

This study is designed to describe the role of the Plains Cree speaking women from the Four Bands Reservation of Hobbema, Alberta. The motivation for this study is to compare the changing role of the Plains Cree speaking women in terms of the maintenance or loss of cultural beliefs. Social change and schooling seem to be the most influential factors affecting the changing role of women. Specifically, the following questions were asked.

1. Does the role of the Plains Cree speaking woman differ for different age groups, and if so, how?
2. Is the maintenance or loss of cultural beliefs and values noticeable at a specific age group, and can this be indicated through verbal performance?
3. Is the observance of cultural beliefs and values noticeable by the informants? Do they appeal to tradition to define their own roles?

C. Limitations

The group of Cree speaking women interviewed do not necessarily represent the Cree speaking population. A generalization made prior to the study was an assumption that almost every Plains Cree speaking woman at Hobbema has had some traditional teaching, but that these teachings have been influenced by social and environmental changes.

A second limitation is due to the belief that many traditional beliefs and values cannot be revealed. Full cooperation was received from the group interviewed due to the fact that I am a Cree speaking native woman from the area. Because the elders and women who were interviewed trusted me, they participated in the study. The extent of the trust is the extent to which they participated. They trusted me not to reveal those things which, by tradition, are never publicized nor put into writing. I have kept that trust, and those limitations do not compromise this study. Another limitation is that the study focuses upon expressed ideals, not behaviour. The sample limits the application of the study, of course. There is no claim that this study describes all Cree women. As a pilot study of the ideals of eighteen women, it stands on its own as a description of these women's ideals.

D. Methodology

The decision to examine the role of the Cree speaking native woman within a Cree speaking society was made due to a lack of research in this area. Contemporary researchers have not attempted to study the importance of traditional beliefs as a basis for disciplinary and behavioural influence for a Cree speaking native female. There has been no adequate description of the tradition as it might be understood by a member of the society in question.

In order to begin such an inquiry, the following procedures were used. To confirm the proficiency of the researcher in traditional knowledge, the advice of two Cree elders, Magnus Swampy, age 80; and Fred Bruno, age 69, was sought. Each elder gave a detailed account of the expectations that define the female role in a Plains Cree society. These elders are my only source of confirmation.

Eighteen women were then interviewed. Considering each decade of age as a group, two women were chosen from each decade and included in that group. From the 90's, down to the mid- and late teens, each decade of age is represented by two women. They are listed in Table 1. They were chosen by me on the basis of my personal knowledge of them, and all of them agreed to the interview. They represent various levels of education and mobility, as well as varieties of lifestyle. In some cases the information from interviewed women and from elders is compared to Mandelbaum's classic ethnography of the Plains Cree, but Mandelbaum cannot be

considered to be authoritative except in the context of a re-creation of the kind of "ideal" societal system which ethnographers of his period reconstructed from informants' descriptions. He is surely not authoritative in the context of how a native female might describe such things as her own role, nor in the context of simple observation.

An approximate time of three months was spent on the actual interviews of the selected group of women and the two elders.

The women are not randomly selected, so the group of women who were interviewed does not represent, and should not be expected to represent, the total population of Cree speaking women at Hobbema. It is assumed, though, that these women constitute a reasonable sample. Since the group gave a fairly coherent summary of traditional expectations, approximating the "ideal" stated by the elders, the basis for this assumption seems reasonable. There is consistency between the women's accounts and the the accounts of the elders. There is great variety of lifestyle and life experience within the population of the Four Bands at Hobbema, and the women are drawn from various lifestyles, various levels of adherence to cultural beliefs, and various employment, school and travel experiences. In that sense, they are typical of the reserve population's diversity. They do not, however, constitute a random sample.

The elders involved expressed definite opinions and reservations concerning the publication of some intimate

cultural beliefs that are the essence of native spirituality. One elder expressed hostile reservations about the publicity of this research as he stated that the use of such material could bring materialistic profit; he explicitly stated that the researcher, being a native person, possessed the knowledge and ability to differentiate between what information should be made public and which should be kept confidential. The other elder stated that the researcher, fully knowledgeable of tradition, must respect the insight that she has been chosen, as a special privilege, to acquire specific knowledge and must not abuse this knowledge; that it is predestined for her to have and to use appropriately.

With these reservations made by the elders kept in mind, the researcher conducted the interviews exclusively in the Cree language for all age groups. The selected group of women interviewed were noticeably from a broad mix of socio-economic groups; therefore no important effect from variable socio-economic status influenced the results. Over the three-month period, interviews were conducted using an audio-tape recorder and taking written notes.

The group of women were divided into nine groups, with two in each group, each group representing a decade of life. Some of the women's characteristics were tabulated for comparison, according to the following characteristics.

1. age
2. language performance

3. langauge comprehension
4. traditional knowledge
5. vocabulary
6. significant travel or employment experience
7. age at marriage
8. choice of marriage partner
9. number of children

Verbal performance in Cree was also evaluated, showing evidence of the age at which native language expressive fluency loss began to occur. Table 2 shows the age distribution of women interviewed, and includes an assessment of their knowledge of the Cree language. Table 3 documents the researcher's assessment of their education, religious affiliation, and career and travel experience. In Table 4, their ages of marriage, their number of children, and the chooser of their marriage partner is documented.

An operational null hypothesis, that traditional knowledge did not differ from native language loss, was assumed. All interviews were conducted in Cree. Some younger women replied in English, which reflected a loss of competence or confidence in speaking Cree, but there was no complete loss of the Cree language, as the comprehension of the younger women was still very good.

The following questionnaire was used as a beginning point of interview. Responses to this questionnaire not only supplied data as to the role and status of each woman interviewed, but also brought out some cultural beliefs that

have been passed down from preceding generations and which are still very much the deciding factors in what role the present native woman chooses to play.

Questionnaire

(Translated from Cree)

We, the native people, have very definite ideas about how a girl should be reared.

1. What are your views on this according to the way you were reared by your parents?
2. What specific role was expected of you, and how early in age were you expected to live to these expectations?
3. At what age were you expected to play an adult role?
4. What expectations were required of you towards the following?
   a. elders
   b. parents
   c. brothers
   d. sisters
   e. uncles
   f. aunts
   g. children
5. What cultural beliefs were you taught and were you expected to observe them?
6. What are your views on the present status of native women? Do you approve? Why or why not?

The audio-recorded interviews with the women were analyzed, and those aspects which related to values in the elder's statements are summarized, translated into English, in the appendix.

II. Historical Background

A. Ethnographic Accounts of the Origin of the Plains Cree

Mandelbaum's classic ethnography of the Plains Cree provides a detailed speculative history of the Plains Cree. The account given below follows Mandelbaum. Quotations are from his ethnography, unless otherwise noted.

The Plains Cree invaded the area of the northern edge of the Great Plains in the Park Belt region which is a transitional area between the forests and the plains. This area was formerly inhabited by the Assiniboine and Gros Ventres in the West. According to Mandelbaum

> [That] the Plains Cree invaded this area from the east is amply verified both by documentary evidence and by the testimony of living informants who assert that their parents or grandparents once lived farther to the east (1940:165).

To further describe the location of the tribes of Indians he states

> [. . . tribal lands extended across the present provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta from the region where the Qu'Appelle River crosses the Manitoba line to the vicinity of Edmonton. The various bands of Plains Cree centered in the river basins included in this area and the tribal range may be defined in terms of the valleys of the Qu'appelle, the lower North Saskatchewan, the lower

South Saskatchewan and the lower Battle rivers (1940:165).

Mandelbaum stated that there were twenty-four small reserves in Saskatchewan and Alberta and one in Montana, where the Plains Cree have settled. At present in Alberta there are forty-two Treaty Indian reserves and nine Métis colonies. Of the fifty-one native settlements, the Plains Cree live on relatively larger Central Alberta reserves occupied by the Enoch Band, Saddle Lake Band, and Hobbema Four Bands. Smaller reserves are for Duffield (Alexis Band), Kehewin Band, Goodfish Lake Band, Frog Lake Band, Sunchild Band, and Cold Lake Band. Alberta's northern reserves are occupied by Woodland Crees, Slaves, and Chipewyans, while the southern reserves are occupied by Sarcee, Stoney, Peigan, Blackfoot, and Blood tribes.

The earliest historical records that mention the Cree were the Jesuit Relations. In these records there are four geographical subdivisions of the Crees, named as being in the region of Lake Nipigon; in the country west of James Bay; between Lake Nipigon and Moose River; and along the East Main River. Most of the historical sources on the Cree describe the Cree as nomadic, wandering tribes who occupied the territory between lake Superior and Hudson's Bay; and state that they settled in one area for the summer and in another for the winter months. The establishment of the fur trade between 1690 and 1740 brought the Cree into the picture as establishing themselves as middlemen and allies

of the English. With the English and French conflicts during the early fur trade period the Crees allied with the Sioux. "H. A. Innis dates this confederacy from the time of the establishment of the Hudson's Bay Company" (Mandelbaum 1940:22).

Mandelbaum cites several remoter sources as to the locality of the Cree, and their movement during the fur trade. Father Gabriel Marest described the Cree as "the most distant, numerous, and powerful. . .and [they] go to trade on the shores of Lake Superior and have been seen at the Sault and at Michilimakinac while several had even been to Montreal." Marest states "the tribe has no village or fixed dwelling, roaming the forests for game" (quoted in Mandelbaum 1940:22). Michaelson said that the Cree "inhabited the shores of James and Hudson Bays." La Potherie stated "the Cree are numerous people with an immense territory. They extend as far as Lake Superior." Emile Petitôt locates the Cree "between the Savanois on the east and the Grandes-Pagnes on the west" (Mandelbaum 1940:23).

From these records it is obvious that the Cree tribes were extensive and that the Cree inhabited a great sweep of land across what is now Central Canada. The movements westward by the Cree were facilitated due to the relatively great numbers of bands. The Cree movement is recorded by Emile Petitôt as he states "the Cree pushed back the timid inhabitants [Athabaskans] of the Lake Athabasca area to Great Slave Lake. The Cree advance was apparently going on

before the advent of the English," (Mandelbaum 1940:24). The move northward by the Cree is not as definitively described as that of the southward-moving Cree. The Jesuit Relations notes

> that the Assiniboin live to the South of Lake Winnipeg and that the other shores of the lake are inhabited by Cree, who occupy not only the northern part as far as the sea, but also the immense stretch of territory beginning at the Lake of the Woods and extending far beyond Lake Winnipeg, (Mandelbaum 1940:24).

To further comment on the movement westward of the Cree, La Verendrye recorded that the Cree lived about Fort St. Charles on the western shores of the Lake of the Woods and on the southeast shore of Lake Winnipeg, near the mouth of the Winnipeg River. The Cree had seen the establishment of a post on the western shore of Lake Winnipegosis, with the building of Fort Bourbon further north, on the northwest shore of Lake Winnipeg, for the Cree of the Lakes and Little Rivers. Not only were these two established by the Cree, but the Mountain Cree also built Fort Dauphin at the head of Lake Winnipegosis. The Cree tribes extended south of Lake Winnipeg and north of Winnipeg River. Mandelbaum states that the Cree flocked to the trading posts in the following manner. In 1640, the Cree were trading with the Nipissings who had become middlemen for the whites. In 1659 the Cree requested the French to visit their country as the Iroquois

had cut off their supplies and sources of supplies. In 1661 the Cree welcomed trader Radisson. In 1659 they had travelled down to Sault Ste. Marie to trade for manufactured goods and corn. In 1682 the Cree travelled to York Factory and Fort Nelson. In 1690 the Cree had become allies and aides to the English and served as guides to Kelsey. In 1695 the fur trade economy saw the Cree travelling as far east as Montreal. With the rapidly increasing fur trade the Cree not only dealt with the English posts to the north but also with the French forts to the south. The demand to acquire goods, arms, and clothing made the Cree economically dependent and thus subservient.

Being a hunting people, and a canoe people, the Cree became specialists in the fur trade. Within the areas of the fur trade in which many of the other native tribes did not participate, the Cree excelled. The beaver fur trade further enhanced the movement of the Cree for when the beaver became scarce in other localities, the trade encroached on Cree territory. The trade economy to which the Cree adapted not only changed their subsistence from that of an independent one to a dependent one, but also affected their relations to other tribes. With the acquisition of guns and arms and the cemented alliance with the Assiniboin, the Cree repulsed the Dakotas, swept over the Gros Ventres and Blackfoot in the West, and the Athapaskans to the north. Thus the move westward by the Crees was made possible by their intense involvement in the fur trade and by their acquiring of the

gun; the gun enabled them to push other tribes before them, and the quest for more furs enabled them to push towards the prairie.

With the English and French conflicts at the close the Cree became the important middlemen for the fur trade between the people of the hinterlands and the English. This perhaps was the shaping of the present Plains Cree. The prestige of the Cree was accomplished by their aggressive involvement with the fur trade, but by the end of the eighteenth century the Cree were already on a downgrade. There are recorded accounts of the decline of the Cree. Dr. Richardson states

> The Cree reversals are due to the acquisition of arms by their enemies and their great dependence on the trader and their passion for liquor. They are no longer the warriors who swept before inhabitants of the Saskatchewan and the Mississippi (Mandelbaum 1940:37).

Alexander MacKenzie stated in his journal "we have clear evidence that the Cree were still partaking of both forest and plains habitat, were pushing southward into prairie country," (Mandelbaum 1940:38). Daniel Harmon (1800-1819) stated in his journal

> the Cree moved into territory formerly occupied by their Assiniboine allies and were pushing southwards in the last years of their independent existence and the Plains Cree were no longer vacillating between

> forest and woodlands, as they had in the middle of the eighteenth century. Although not yet firmly entrenched in the prairie lands, their woodland excursions were becoming less habitual (Mandelbaum 1940:39).

According to Mandelbaum, the period 1760-1820 saw the Cree to their furthest extension; in the MacKenzie Basin they overrode the Athapaskans, and the Qu'Appelle and South Saskatchewan Basins had been entered by the Cree. Lewis and Clark wrote that "the Cree generally rove in the open plains, but they also resort to marshy and wooded lands;" Duncan Cameron, 1804, a trader, wrote "that an increase in Cree population forced the tribe into territories they had not previously inhabited." He goes on to state:

> every old man with whom I have conversed, and from whom I made some inquiry on this subject, told me that his father or grandfather was from either of these two places (Hudson's Bay or Lake Superior) and that the reason they came so far back inland could be accounted for in no other way than the following: population was on the increase, both in Hudson's Bay and on the shores of Lake Superior, and as Indians, who are obliged to rove from place to place for a good hunting ground, are equally at home in any place where they can find their living, they took to the interior of the country where they found innumerable rivers and lakes, swarming with a vast

quantity of fish, beaver and otter (Mandelbaum 1940:41).

Along with the recorded expansion of the Cree, there is recorded evidence of a change of disposition and character of the Cree. Bishop Taché in 1850 described the "blood-thirsty nature as contrasted with the pacific disposition of their woods brethren who regaled themselves much more wisely by giving great feasts rather than by massacring their neighbors." Hind refers to the constant animosity between the Blackfoot and the Cree, usually instigated by the Cree by stealing the Blackfoot horses. John Palliser, 1857, also relates tales about the Blackfoot and Cree warfare usually being started by the Cree, by stealing the best herds of Blackfoot horses. Palliser also records evidence of the migration of the Cree:

> In fact the Crees generally may thank the traders for the greater part of the interior they now have in their hands, for it is not a great many years since the Blackfeet held the whole Saskatchewan plains, at which time the Stone Indians or Assiniboines inhabited the country lying along the river of that name, and the Cree were confined mostly to the thickly-wooded country to the north of Lake Winnipeg, and between that lake and Hudson's Bay. On the fur trade, however, being pushed up the Saskatchwan and the Crees obtaining fire arms of the traders, they drove the Blackfoot and Fall Indians

> or Gros Ventres, west, at the time taking to horses, they gradually became Prairie Indians and forming a league with the Stone Indians, who, as late as 1819, could not obtain guns in trade at the Forts, succeeded in confining Blackfeet to the limits they now rarely overstep, namely, from the upper waters of the Missouri. . .Crees also inhabit the country to the north of the Saskatchewan where they are mostly what are called thick or strongwood Indians, there being only a few horses among them (Mandelbaum 1940:42).

Another evidence of the eastern location of the Cree prior to their move westward is in the record by Father Lacombe:

> the expansion of the Cree has made it possible for one equipped with a knowledge of the Cree language to communicate with any Canadian tribe, even with the hostile Blackfoot and Sarsi who have on occasion camped with them (Mandelbaum 1940:42).

Lacombe further recalls a conversation between himself and a Plains Cree elder who claimed that his people had lived to the east, among the Maskegon and Saulteaux and that they were separated because some of the bands went further and further afield in search for herds until distance between them and those in the river regions was considerable (ibid.).

With the Cree loosely established in the prairie territory a series of treaties with the Dominion government began. These treaties had an objective of confining the Cree to specific ranges with imposed obligations. These confinements and imposed obligations were not in keeping with the lifestyle of the once nomadic wandering people and the Cree soon rebelled. The first of the treaties was signed in 1871 which obligated the Cree to keep peace. In return they were given provisions to lessen starvation among their people. In 1874 the Cree and Saulteaux at Qu'Appelle Lakes signed a pact; in 1875 the Swampy Cree drew up a treaty at Lake Winnipeg. In 1876, the Plains Cree signed negotiated treaty at Forts Pitt and Carlton. After negotiations had been completed with the Dominion government, the Cree were confined to reserves and experienced a complete loss of power. Some Cree participated in the rebellion of 1885; many from the Four Bands at Hobbema who were sympathetic to Riel fled to Montana. Other Plains Cree who had participated in the rebellion sought refuge at Hobbema. The present composition of the reserve owes a great deal to that struggle.

B. A Short History of Hobbema

The historical background of Hobbema, as stated by P.E. Breton, O.M.I, in the book, Hobbema, Ongoing Indian Mission of Central Alberta, is as follows.

In 1845 the Oblate missionaries settled in the Red River and were able to extend their contact into Fort Edmonton and into the Battle River area where the Plains Cree held sway. From the period of 1845 to 1877, the Plains Cree had undergone severe setbacks by disease and by the disappearance of the buffalo herds. By 1876, most Cree bands had assembled around Fort Pitt and Fort Carlton for the Treaty 6 negotiations that were forced upon them due to starvation. The Battle River Crees (Hobbema) were present, but the following year under Chief Bobtail this band travelled to the Blackfoot country to adhere to Treaty 6.

In 1884 the mission of Hobbema was established under Father Gabillon. In 1887, the first school in Hobbema came into existence, and history shows that between 1884 and 1894 four teachers had been employed: Mr. Desautels (1887-1888); Mr. Willie Kelly (1889-1890); an unknown woman (1890); and Miss Ada Latulippe (1891). In 1894, a group of nuns established a boarding school which was financed by the Department of Indian Affairs. From the period of 1894 to the 1950's, the settlement of Hobbema grew both in education and economically. Education had been handled by the Church and by Indian Affairs; and the economy of the reserve by Indian Affairs. From the 1950's to the present, Hobbema became a growing, affluent reservation with band administration of local government and economic development, and with increased band enterprises. Formal education progressed from residential schools to integrated schools into nearby towns

and cities, and to the establishment of a local cultural college which offers post-secondary education to the local people.

The composition of Hobbema (Muskwacheesik) could be summed up in the following manner.

1. Original settlement of people was influenced and dictated by several events, including the signing of Treaty 6, the Louis Riel Rebellion, the Frog Lake uprising, and the movement of people to and from Montana, U.S.A.
2. Physical features: Townsite surrounded by agricultural land on rolling parkland.
3. Local government
   a. Governing bodies, the chiefs and councils of four bands:
      1) Samson Band
      2) Ermineskin Band
      3) Louis Bull Band
      4) Montana (formerly Bob Tail) Band
   b. Type of government: Tribal, chief and council being elected, beginning for
      1) Samson (1940's)
      2) Montana (1940's)
      3) Ermineskin (1968)
      4) Louis Bull (1971)
   c. Representation: Chief represents toal band population; councillor represents 100 band members

(maximum representation on council is 12 councillors, as stated in the Indian Act); representation by population from each of the four bands on the Four Band Council.

d. Administration

1) Each band has its own administration.

2) Each band makes an annual budget (e.g., projects, roads, housing, welfare, community farms, ranches).

3) Four band administration is of recreation, oil rights, Pigeon Lake projects, such as summer resort camps.

.

C. The History of the Plains Cree, Plains Cree Version

Regardless of all the historical, documented history of the Plains Cree in textbooks, the Plains Cree people of Hobbema, a subdivision from the Beaver Hills People, have their own version. The elders speak of the whole Indian nation as having been Cree at one time in the whole of North America, but due to conflicting interests the Indian people were scattered throughout the vastness of the continent, establishing themselves into groups with their own lifestyles and languages. Yet, say the elders, the evidence of their Cree origin is present, for every Native language has a Cree word in its vocabulary.

D. Native Education History of Hobbema

The formal schooling background of Hobbema dates to the latter 1880's. The Oblate missionaries had first settled in Hobbema in 1884, establishing the Our Lady of Seven Sorrows Mission on the Bobtail Reserve. The first boarding school came into existence in 1889 with twelve students, but by the end of the year, the number of students increased to fifty-eight, coming from other reserves such as Enoch and Alexander. This boarding school housed students aged from six to thirteen years of age. The administration and the teaching was under the direction of the Roman Catholic clergy, while the Department of Indian Affairs were in charge of the financial administration.

The aim primarily of native education had been to acculturate the native children into the majority society until the process of acculturation had been completed. The attempted acculturation process of the native children began by removing the children from their homes on the reservation and accomodating these students in residential schools.

As the enrollment of students increased the number of clergy increased in native communities. From the period of the 1880's to the latter 1920's, the residential schools were known as industrial schools. Excerpts from the present study indicate that these industrial schools had two-fold purposes; first to educate the native students in the domestic arts of living and second to educate the native students in basic academic skills.

Some of the interviewed women's comments about this era are informative: four women's comments are thus summarized here. The youngest of these is 39 years of age. The younger women went to integrated schools in Wetaskiwin or Ponoka, or participated in off-reserve boarding programs.

Woman A, age 93, states: "The schooling I received was not what it is today. There were a lot of students, about one hundred, both boys and girls, in school. I went to school when I was about ten years old. Each day we were taught how to pray. It was praying all the time. All the ceremonies we were taught at home were not good for us. This is what we were always told. We were told to forget all these. Instead we were taught sewing, cleaning, cooking and looking after the smaller children. Sometimes we were taught how to read and write. We had to speak English and we could not speak our language.

"We never went home except one day at Christmas, and the summer months, maybe for one month. We left school when we were old enough to leave. We worked hard when we were in school and we were taught a lot about praying, and we learned how to obey the sisters, and the father [priest] was like a god. We could never run away, and we never went near the boys. We went to church every day no matter what the weather was like. We had our hair cut and we were told that long hair was not healthy. I cried a lot at night and was so afraid of the dark when I started school, but afterwards I got used to living away from home. The children are lucky

today because they stay home and then go to school."

Woman D, age 83: "I did not like school. We worked very hard, sewing, mending, cleaning, cooking. The big girls looked after the smaller children. The big boys all worked in the field, or garden, or in the barn at the back of the school. We went to class in the afternoon to learn to read and speak English and to pray. We prayed all the time, all of us, and we went to church a lot, every day."

Woman H, age 60 says: "School in our time was very different than it is today. We never went home to our parents, only on holidays. We all wore the same clothing, girls, that is. We went to school all day, and learned housework, sewing and cooking after school and on Saturdays and Sundays. We prayed very often during the day. We were not allowed to speak Cree; we had to speak English all the time. We were told the Indian way was not the right way of living. Sometimes things were really bad."

Woman L, age 39: "My education has been different from my children's. I attended residential school from age seven to age fourteen, and then went to a religious convent to finish my high school education. The residential school days were very structured and institutionalized. We were even issued a number and you kept this number until you left school. To recall the daily routine is like describing any institutional living. We got up very early each morning, first to attend church. Everyone woke up to a line: line up for bathroom to get wash water in our individual basins,

line up to wash, to dress, to make beds, line up to little girls' dorm to help dress the smaller ones and assist their bed-making, making note of all bed-wetters who were later punished; then line up to descend from the dorms to the dining rooms where we lined up for church, then filed two by two all the way to church; lined up in church pews, lined up after church and file back to dining rooms of the main buildings, where we lined up for breakfast after we recited the grace before meals.

"We always ate in silence at all meals, and never forgot the grace after meals. We did morning chores then went to classes. We had no bathroom breaks until noon. Everyone did chores, then had a recreation period, then the afternoon classes. After school we either went to the sewing room to mend clothes--each girl was assigned four boys and three small girls and took care of their clothing, mending, buttons, ironing--or we went to the basement to peel potatoes, carrots, turnips, and to slice and count bread. Supper time was in silence. Then chores. If we were lucky we had recreation period for an hour except in May and October, when we went to church every evening to say the rosary, for those were the months for the Virgin Mary.

"The number and type of chores changed as the student grew older. There was very little association with the boys except when we prepared for Christmas concerts. But then like every institution there were ways of having a boyfriend, keyhole conversations, notes and long distance

gestures that were a form of communicating. Perhaps what stands out the most in my mind was the constant reminder by the nuns that we had to be grateful to God for their presence, for we had a chance of being saved; and the most common words used were 'pagan,' 'savages,' and 'converts.'"

III. The Elders

There has been a very definite persistence of traditional value learning through generations of the Plains Cree people, a persistence that has been maintained through oral teachings. Without reference to any literature on native traditionalism, the following statements were given orally in Cree by two leading recognized elders, whom I wish to quote as the only source of confirmation in my research. I shall use "Elder A" and "Elder B" to identify them in the text. The information was audio-tape recorded and I personally interpreted the information from Plains Cree (Hobbema dialect) to English.

Elder A is 81 years old. A transliteration of his statement on the traditional role of women is as follows.

"To learn one's cultural beliefs and way of living is not only a line to life, but all the way a person is to feel, see, think, and behave. Each child at birth is destined to be, or to do, something for his people. In order to achieve what he is destined to be, the child is taught and trained by observation and by living his cultural ways. [The elder uses the phrase 'his native ways of life.']

"You have specifically inquired about how a woman in our society is prepared for her role. This is one of the most important trainings a child receives. A woman in our society is the home. In order to be able to know what is home, a native girl is prepared and taught very early in life that, first of all, she will one day be a wife and

mother, and second, she is responsible for the lives given to her. To be able to succeed in these two, the girl must be clean in mind, spirit and appearance; if she is clean in mind she has high morals; if she is clean in spirit she has the highest regard to life and nature; if she is clean in appearance, she regards herself with respect and dignity.

"The training for a girl is very intensive and demanding, creating endurance. There is no discipline [physical], for the only method used is to place any type of weapon before her, asking her to use it if she is rebellious. (Usually a piece of wood or rock is placed before her.) A girl is highly regarded and shown respect from early childhood. She is taught household chores as soon as she shows capability. The more competence she shows, the earlier she achieves adulthood. Most well trained girls are adults by the age of nine or ten years, and become full fledged women upon puberty.

"Puberty is the most important event in the lives of a girl and members of the family. The girl undergoes extensive training outside her family home. She is removed from her home and is required to live with an elderly woman (usually with a grandmother) for the duration of her first menstrual period. She rises with the sun and goes to bed at sundown. She is taught not to cry, for her eyes will remain red in colour for the rest of her life, denoting that she feared womanhood. She is not allowed to touch her hair, for she shortens her life, thus the lives of the children she might

have had, had she lived a long life. A young woman is usually in charge of her grooming. She is not to look at males for she will be promiscuous. She does not see her reflection in water or mirror for she will be vain. She does not lie down or take long rest periods for she will be lazy. She does not prepare food for herself or the elder woman for she is not pure enough to touch life-giving things, but she observes how food is cleaned, prepared and cooked. She is taught to carry water and wood. (Modern day technology of plumbing and heating has not eliminated this training for it is still done.) She is given oral teaching each evening; one on conception and pregnancy; on the role of wife; on the role of motherhood; on her social role. The teachings on conception and pregnancy are most important for this is the girl's main role in life. A girl is taught never to stop a pregnancy for if she does the fetus suffocates her at her deathbed. She is taught what not to eat or do while she is pregnant. She does not eat certain parts of an animal. She does not eat ears, for her child will have big ears; she does not eat kidneys for her child will be a bed-wetter; she does not eat tripe for her child will have an undesirable characteristic. She must eat liver for her child will be of strong character. She must eat the heart for her child will be kind. She does not ridicule anyone's affliction for her child will be born with the same affliction. She is not to be ashamed of her pregnancy for her child's body will have a lot of hair. She is not to be frightened for her child will

show cowardice.

"A girl is taught to be kind and to respect her husband (her parents' choice or her own). When the girl is single she is completely under her father's control--even married she still must obey her father (or an older brother if her father is deceased). A husband takes the role of a provider and must do so with the cooperation of his wife. Both have equal responsibility towards the children; the father trains the boys but has complete control over the girls; the mother trains the girls but has complete control over the boys. The girl is trained not to abuse her husband sexually, particularly not to be unfaithful. She is taught to respect herself, but if she chooses to use infidelity she has a choice of her own; if a woman commits adultery and is able to look at her husband in the eyes without guilt, then she has chosen to become an unfaithful wife; but if she is unable to look at her husband, then she has a choice to confess of her unfaithfulness or to leave. Marriage is sacred for as long as the husband and wife keep it sacred. A husband has the right to give his wife away to any man she is having an affair with.

"A girl is trained and taught on how to be a mother. The most important thing she is taught is that any child she may have is not hers to own but rather is chosen by the Great Spirit to be the guardian of this child. She is to respect the child and teach the child everying he has a right to learn.

"A girl is trained and taught how to play her role socially within a group setting. She is taught to behave like a respectable woman at all times. She is taught to remain silent."

With humour, the elder comments "A girl is taught never to laugh out too loudly in a crowd or she shows she is mischievous and challenges advances from men; she is told never to wet her abdomen area when washing clothes for she will have a mean husband; she is told if thistle seeds cling to her clothing she will be of jealous nature; she is told if she feels rejected because she was not given something (foood, or anything to eat) that was given to another, she wil have white spots on her nails." Elder A states these are just character-forming methods of teaching.

Elder B, aged 74 years, listened to the taped conversation of Elder A and made his own comments. Elder B claimed that Elder A gave accurate information and stated that all facts have been taught to him as well.

Elder B added "For each event in the life of a girl a feast is held in her honour by members of her family. A girl never serves a feast for she does not have the right to. A girl is limited in her participation of ceremonies. A girl is not allowed to host a sundance, a tea dance, and has never been allowed to partake in the chicken dance as they do now. A girl is never to have a sweat bath. She is never to ride a horse during menstrual periods, or enter any ceremonies, or touch ceremonial objects, or touch men's head

attire, or participate in sports. A girl's menstrual period should be a quiet time, a time of thinking of her womanhood, and she should treat herself with great care and dignity. A girl is taught never to be aggressive, for to be aggressive is to invite ridicule and embarrassment for the father and brother. The white man will never understand the importance of native cultural teaching and native religion. The white man thinks and believes that the native way of life is primitive and that it hinders the learning of children in school, but he does not realize that native cultural teaching is much more influential in how a child or girl feels and thinks.

"So many times I have heard the white man say native children are not taught to be obedient; they are not taught, they learn how, and how they learn is through respect and care, not by demands. A child has learned not to play outside at night, not because it is bedtime, but because he is inviting spirits to play with him; a girl learns not to leave food and dirty dishes out at night because she is inviting undesirable spirits into the house; a child learns to respect and obey elders and parents and he will earn himself a long life; a child learns not to abuse or injure animals for he will encounter the same injury; a child learns not to ridicule other people for some affliction, for it will be upon him; a child learns to respect nature for this is his life. All the cultural teachings cannot be taught, they have to be learned and lived. There are so many

things that I can tell you, perhaps it would take from sunrise to sunset but these are not to be written, they are to be lived."

These taped conversations of the two Plains Cree speaking elders have been the basis of information for this study of the role of the Plains Cree native women within a Plains Cree society.

IV. The Women

A. Summary

A total of eighteen women were interviewed. A group of two women represented each ten year period of age. The oldest woman was 93 years of age. Age ranges from the selected women are tabulated in Table 1, which shows them to represent a continuity of ages. The youngest girl interviewed was fifteen years of age. Table 2 shows Cree comprehension and fluency as well as the researcher's assessment of the woman's knowledge of tradition. Table 3 depicts the levels of education and significant travel or employment experience. It also shows religious affiliation. On the variables of age, level of education, amount of career experience, relgious affiliation, the amount or level of traditional knowledge and practice was very similar in all the women.

Table 4 shows the ages at which each woman married, the chooser of her marriage partner, and how many children each woman had during the course of her life.

It is interesting to note that women from the age groups of 60 to 93 years married at a very early age (14 and 15), each marriage having been arranged by the parents (or guardian in one instance). The group including ages 50 and 59 married at a much older age and married their own choice of man. Ages 40 and 39 show marriage at a later age, but the marriage arranged by parents. The age groups of 31, 30 and

24 did not marry but chose to live common law (with non-treaty husbands); age group of 19 married own choice, and the rest of the younger group are still single. The number of children each woman had varied, with the largest numbers being in the age groups of 59 to 79. None of the wowmen interviewed believed in the use of contraceptives, due to a cultural prohibition.

Of the eighteen women interviewed, six were not fully fluent in the Cree language, but comprehension of the language was adequate enough so that these six women were able to listen in Cree and to respond in English. The group of twelve that responded in Cree were within the age group of 30 to 90. Within the 39 to 90 age group, traditional knowledge was very much the essence of the philosophical outlook on how one should live. The impact of traditional practice was much more evident from the age group of 50 to 90. There was evidence of religious influence and institutionalization in this age group, but the devotedness to traditonal practice was much more influential than that of the church or school. The researcher found a reserved hostility towards, and perhaps some ridicule of, religious and institutional influences to which this group had been exposed.

A small, remarkable but not really significant, difference was observed between the age groups of 30 to 50. The difference accounted for was more in the acquisition of personal freedom for the women involved, rather than any

outside societal influence. This age group expressed the loosening of parental control. The women expressed that they were free to marry the choice of their own, that they had the choice of attending educational institutions, the choice of maintaining their own religious beliefs, and the choice to have careers and jobs outside the reserve.

A remarkable difference was observed between the age of 20 to 30 in the various areas: the level of education experienced by the group (e.g., one woman of 30 had attened a city high school, completing a course in accounting, and was presently employed as a band accounts clerk; another woman of 29 had a university degree in education); level of mobility (each woman in the group had travelled extensively and each one possessed a vehicle and an operator's license, thus allowing mobility); one woman of 29 remained single, yet had two children, thus demonstrating that in traditional practice a woman was not condemned for having an illegitimate child. Mandelbaum says this in his ethnography:

> An unmarried girl who gave birth to a child was married off to an elderly or poor husband if the father of the child were unwilling to marry her. If she thereafter comported herself with modesty and dignity, no stigma was attached to her or the child (1940:245).

Single parenthood made its appearance in this younger group of women, but the father's role was automatically maintained by the grandfather of the child.

A remarkable difference was observed in the under-20 age group in terms of level and type of educational institution attended, language spoken and understood, and use of modern technology.

Yet the women all appealed to, and accepted as valid, traditional values, as they expressed ideals of womanly behaviour.

B. The Women and Their Roles

Mandelbaum wrote of the individual life cycle among the Plains Cree. He records information received from informants in the 1930's dealing with all phases of the life cycle. Regarding specific issues, he says of pregnancy

> Several informants stated that a pregnant woman took care not to strain or overexert herself, but that no prohibitions were observed (1940:241).

Yet this study indicates otherwise, and that Mandelbaum did not have access to reliable information. Woman G claims that

> a woman is never to be ashamed of her pregnancy for her child will be covered with hair. She cannot eat certain foods like kidneys, for her child will be a bedwetter; a nose, for her child will have a big nose; or ears, for her child will have big ears.

Mandelbaum states that

> Not long after the child was born its parents prepared a feast. They invited a number of people and especially an old man known to have powerful

> supernatural guardians. Female children were usually named by some old woman renowned for her supernatural powers.

This study shows the contrary. The female child was never named by a woman, it was just that she could be given the name of a renowned old woman. The following is by Woman A: "A feast would be held to honour a child with a name, but this feast was mostly for the male children, and the ceremony could only be performed by a male elder."

Mandelbaum records girls' puberty rituals amongst the Plains Cree in the following manner.

> Girls were secluded for four nights at their first menstruation. A small tipi was set up at some distance from the encampment and there the girl remained with an old woman. The pubescent was kept busy chopping wood, sewing, and preparing hides. At night the old woman would tell her tales and perhaps relate some didactic anecdotes concerning sexual matters. Before the girl was allowed to step out of the tipi, the old woman made sure that no man was in the vicinity, for should she look on a man, he would be liable to lose his supernatural guardians. The girl used a pointed wooden stick to scratch her head. During her seclusion she was given very little to eat and was expected to cry a good deal (1940:241).

Yet, says Woman A, "During first menstruation the girl does not cry for her eyes will remain red."

And Woman B says "The girl during first menstrual period does not cry."

To examine thoroughly the life cycle of the individual female within a Plains Cree society one begins to examine the observance of birth. At the time of birth the female is destined to a specific role by two factors:

1. place in family--if oldest, the woman is destined to become a prominent member of the family in terms of respectability and responsibilty; and
2. the name given--if named after a superior woman, she is expected to live up to the role the name implies.

In the first few years of childhood, the Cree female finds herself on the threshold of carefree existence where she does not experience physical disicpline, but rather is taught discipline through traditional teachings. Out of these teachings, behavioural attitudes soon develop. The traditional teachings are categorized into various areas, but all have one effect and that is to achieve the status of womanhood as early as one can be expected to. A Cree female individual is taught to give respect to all members of the family as well as to the forces of nature and to animals. The essence of Plains Cree philosophy is respect for life: for man, for animal, for nature.

Some of the fundamental teachings of the Cree female with respect to kin are as follows.

1. Father
   a. a Cree female must be totally controlled by father in terms of behaviour and must adhere to father's rules at all times, even in marriage, for as long as the father lives;
   b. a female never steps over clothing of the father and brother, especially a hat;
   c. a female takes her relationship to her father as informing her relationship to her brother.
2. Brother
   a. A Cree female shows the same respect for a brother as she would to a father.
   b. The rule of clothing and hat are applied here, as well.
   c. A sister does not converse with a brother. Mandelbaum (1940:233) states "a girl must never speak to her own brothers and a man must never talk to his sisters. When your sisters are young you can play with them, but when they are about ten years old you must quit."
   d. A sister never swears of uses profane language in the presence of a brother.
3. Sister
   a. If older, all respect due to mother is due to the older sister.
   b. The older sister takes mother's place in the absence of the mother.

4. Uncles
   a. Paternal, regarded as a father and holds same relationship.
   b. Maternal, regarded with much more respect to a point where there is no personal communication and holds same relationship as father-in-law.
5. Aunts
   a. Paternal, regarded with much respect with little or no communication, and holds same relationship as a mother-in-law.
   b. Maternal, holds same relationship as that of a mother.
6. Female Cousins
   a. Paternal, regarded with much respect, with limited communication, and holds same relationship as a sister-in-law.
   b. Maternal, holds same relationship as a sister.
7. Male Cousins
   a. Paternal, holds same relationship as a brother.
   b. Maternal, holds a respected yet freer relationship where there is much teasing and a close communication, and holds same relationship as a brother-in-law.
8. Nephews
   a. Brother's offspring, holds a restrained relationship, where there is little or no communication, and holds same relationship as a

No family planning method

son-in-law.

b. Sister's offspring, holds the relationship of son.

9. Nieces

a. Brother's offspring, holds a restrained relationship, with little or no communication, and has relationship as daughter-in-law. Use of personal name is prohibited, and must be addressed by kinship terms.

b. Sister's offspring, holds daughter relationship.

10. Roles of Womanhood. Traditional observances are rigid in relation to the role of womanhood. Observances of puberty are perhaps the most traumatic as the status changes from that of a girl to woman. Observances that are strictly followed are

a. four day seclusion with eldery woman supervising;

b. no contact with parents, or other members of the family, especially males;

c. the individual does all daily tasks of cleaning, cooking and sewing;

d. personal care is done by elderly woman for the individual is not allowed to touch her face or hair;

e. the individual must not cry, for her eyes will remain red for the rest of her life;

f. ceremonial observances are excluded when one is menstruating.

11. Family Planning. There is no method of family planning for the role of woman is to bear children, and if any

abortion is caused purposely, the fetus will remain alive to prolong the death and suffering of the woman who caused the abortion.

12. Observance of nature brings traditional beliefs that formed the basis of discipline:
    a. One never steps out to play at nightfall, for the spirits of the dead will join you in play.
    b. Whatever infliction one brings on an animal or insect, the person will suffer the same infliction in due time.
    c. Respect for plant life is essential to avoid famine.
13. Ceremonial Observances. The female individual in a Cree society limited ceremonial observances.
    a. Sundance: the ceremony may be observed by the female, provided she is not menstruating.
    b. Feasts: the observance is limited only when menstruating, otherwise the female is expected to know the method of preparation.
    c. The female at one time could not participate at the powwow, except for the Owl dance (pers. comm., Mrs. Oldpan).
14. Appearance.
    a. The female individual does not indulge in vanity for if she is vain of her beauty, her beauty will be destroyed by accident or deformity from illness.
    b. The female individual does not ridicule the deformity or the homeliness of another, for she will

bring upon herself the same affliction.

c. The female individual does not abuse any given beauty by overindulgence or neglect, for she abuses the gift of the spirits.

15. Behaviour

a. The female individual does not behave standoffishly, because she has beauty for the following reasons.

1) If a female possesses beauty and has and keeps a friendly nature to mankind and nature, she possesses more beauty;

2) If a female lacks physical beauty but has kindness and friendliness, she possesses beauty as if she were actually physically beautiful.

b. The female individual exhibits behaviour according to self estimation; if she respects herself, she behaves respectfully; if not, she is more than noticeable.

16. Children. The female individual is taught that the children she has borne are not hers to have, therefore, she must regard these children with love, and respect them, allowing them to grow freely within her care, and without causing physical abuse. The female individual must never regard one particular child more than the rest, for the child will not live too long.

17. Pregnancy.

a. The female individual was destined to have children, and if she causes or inflicts abortion or

miscarriage upon herself, the fetus will suffocate her at her death bed.

b. The female individual must never be ashamed or her pregnancy, for the child will then feature a hairy body.

c. The female individual when in a pregnant state must not eat or consume some portions of an animal, for these specific reasons:

1) if she consumes kidneys of an animal, the child will have urinary problems such as bedwetting or incontinence;

2) if the female consumes portions of nose, ears, and so forth, the child will have prominent features of the same;

3) if the female spends a lot of time sleeping during pregnancy, the child will be born with a large head;

4) if the female, during pregnancy, ridicules the physical defects of another, or is surprised by another's appearance, or dislikes the characteristics of another, the child will bear resemblance to the things ridiculed or noticed.

18. Ceremonial Participation.

a. If a female's children are participating in a ceremony for the first time, it is the duty of the female individual and her husband to participate in a thanksgiving ceremony (a give-away) to honour the

child's participation.

b. The female, while menstruating, does not attend any ceremonials for she will destroy the spiritual powers of the elders. This is very much observed today, as it was in earlier times, particularly during the sundance ceremony, where the female is not allowed to enter the lodge while menstruating. The elder holding the sundance has the power to detect any female violating this rule and will ask the female to leave; it is said that the female who enters the sundance lodge while menstruating projects visually identifiable signs around her, and thus can be recognized by the elder. It is also believed that a dancer may faint due to this and when one does it is common knowledge that the violation has taken place.

c. In the traditional practice, a female is not allowed to participate in the powwow dances (chicken dances, grass dances, etc.) except for the Owl Dance and other Round Dances.

d. Medicinal Orientation Ceremony: it is the duty of the female individual who possesses medicinal knowledge to hold a medicinal ceremony to instruct the oldest daughter in the different procedures of medicine making, and the oldest daughter in turn must instruct her oldest daughter. (This is still in practice, much more so in recent years.)

The female individual in a Cree society was expected to adhere to the norms set out by the society. No real range of personal freedom was experienced until the girl reached the age where she would receive education. Even then, traditional observance had a forceful effect on her behaviour. These observances still exist, and are very much part of the lives of the Cree women of today.

V. Discussion

The hypothesis that the influence of traditional beliefs and values on the norms and behaviours, as expressed by the Plains Cree speaking women, would persist through all age groups, was essentially supported by this pilot study. The different age groups of women studied did not differ in principle in their knowledge of traditional beliefs and values. Contrary to the assumption that through acculturation processes, an individual loses traditional beliefs or traditional knowledge, this study found that the traditional beliefs existed the same from one age group of Cree women to another. A 15-year-old traditional Cree girl gave essentially the same responses to the questionnaire on traditional learning as did the 93-year old. From the age of 15 to 93, the same belief on abortion was evident, although the 15-year old did not know the specific reason for the belief. (Traditionally, she is not informed at that age.) She maintained the same knowledge of principle as the 93-year old.

An examination of their knowledge of traditional beliefs and values and the knowledge of the Cree language use, in expression and comprehension, was recorded. Directions for administering the interviews were the same for each woman, with the exception that the age group between 15 and 30 were allowed to respond in English. In this younger age group it was evident that there was a loss of native language expressive fluency, for these women could

never speak the Cree language without the use of some English. Considering the loss of language competence, it is interesting to note that there is no lack of traditional beliefs and values knowledge found in this study between the different groups of women.

The apparent consensus about the reason for the loss of native language use seems to centre around the following

1. curriculum in schools
2. the "overlapping" effect of adaptation to what is seen by the women as another cultural value system, the surrounding non-native community;
3. increased personal freedom from total parental control; and
4. modern emphasis on early childen exposure to kindergarten and television.

One of the main criticisms of this study might be its failure to discriminate adequately between the selected groups of women to determine patterns of loss of language in more detail. Although no effort was made in this study to compare the language fluency exactly, the administration of the interview exclusively in Cree provided some information relevant to this issue. Significantly, this lack of facility in Cree language interpretation of traditional beliefs and values showed the difference to be in terms of clarity and exact meaning in women's responses, and difference in specific metaphors and figures of speech. These results may indicate that the loss of expressive oral Cree does

eliminate some relevance of the traditional beliefs and values.

A. Conclusions

One main conclusion can be drawn from this study. The role of the Cree speaking woman in a Cree society has changed due to social changes attributed to education and mobility; yet the most influential factor in determining attitudes of these Cree speaking women have been their sincere belief and practice of the traditional teachings that each one embedded in their lives. They said that through tradition they have taught, and will teach, their children so that the Cree culture may exist from generation to generation.

Is there then a loss of tradition through acculturation?

B. Implication

There are some differences noted in the women's responses. If loss of culture is a problem, no problem exists here. Interview responses obtained from the different age groups of native women are essentially comparable. There is some difference in the women's ability to express their views in Cree. This demonstrates the fact that knowledge of traditional beliefs and values does not necessarily imply a knowledge of and expressive ability in a native language. Rather, language comprehension plays a major part in the

clarity and exact interpretation of these beliefs and values.

In terms of further research or study the following implications exist.

1. A larger sample of native women drawn randomly from a local native community should be studied in the same way to determine whether the findings of this study are general.
2. A study of Cree native women specifically divided into two groups, Cree speakers and non-Cree speakers, should be undertaken; comparing the amount and elaboration of traditional knowledge which the two groups possess.
3. There should be a study of traditional practice of beliefs and values within a given group of women, in which one might compare the lifestyles of each to a group with no knowledge whatsoever of this traditional way.
4. A study of two or more groups of native women from other tribes, such as Cree, Stoney, and Blackfoot, should be undertaken, in order to draw comparisons and to document differences and similarities in patterns of retention of values.
5. A major implication is that the culture is alive.

Ekose.

VI. Tables

Table 1

List of Women By Age

Woman	Age
Woman A	93
Woman B	90
Woman C	87
Woman D	83
Woman E	79
Woman F	73
Woman G	69
Woman H	60
Woman I	59
Woman J	50
Woman K	40
Woman L	39
Woman M	31
Woman N	30
Woman O	24
Woman P	23
Woman Q	19
Woman R	15

Table 2

Age Distribution of Women Interviewed and Assessment of Cree Knowledge

Age In Years	Cree Fluency and Comprehension	Traditional Knowledge and Practice
93	excellent	excellent
93	excellent	excellent
90	excellent	excellent
87	excellent	excellent
83	excellent	excellent
78	excellent	excellent
73	excellent	excellent
68	excellent	excellent
60	excellent	excellent
59	excellent	excellent
50	excellent	excellent
40	excellent	excellent
31	Cree language difficulty	excellent
30	responded in English	excellent
24	responded in English	excellent
23	responded in English	excellent
19	no Cree spoken	some
15	no Cree spoken	some

Table 3

Assessment of Education, Religious Affiliation And Career and Travel Experience

Age In Years	Religion	Level of	Experience
93	RC	Industrial School	Homemaker
90	RC	Industrial School	Homemaker
87	Prot.	Industrial School	Homemaker
83	Prot.	Grade 4	Homemaker
79	RC	Grade 4	Homemaker
73	RC	Grade 4	Homemaker
69	RC	Grade 6	Homemaker
60	RC	Grade 6	Homemaker
59	RC	Grade 7	Homemaker
50	RC	Grade 8	Ward aide for 6 years
40	RC	Grade 9	Band offices
39	RC	Grade 12	Off reserve training as CNA; IAA office
31	Mormon	Grade 12	10 yrs. employed by band
30	Mormon	B.Ed.	Employed on Reserve
24	Mormon	Grade 11	None
23	Mormon	Grade 11	None
19	Mormon	Grade 10	Travel to Europe
15	Prot.	Grade 10	Office Experience

Table 4

Ages At Marriage, Number of Children, And Choice of Marriage Partner

Age	Age At Marriage	Choice	Number of Children
93	14	Parents	9
90	15	Parents	4
87	15	Parents	4
83	15	Parents	5
79	15	Parents	14
73	15	Parents	12
69	15	Aunt	13
60	15	Parents	11
59	18	Own	10
50	24	Own	8
40	18	Parents	7
39	18	Parents	5
31	NA	Unmarried	5
30	NA	Unmarried	2
24	NA	Unmarried	3
23	19	Own	2
19	NA	Single	0
15	NA	Single	0

VII. Bibliography

BRETON, P.E., OMI
1972 Hobbema, Ongoing Mission of Central Alberta. In History of Hobbema, Hobbema Curriculum Projects. Hobbema, Alberta: Ermineskin School.

KLUCKHOHN, C.
1960 "The concept of culture." In E.A. Schulu et al., eds., Readings in Sociology, Second Edition. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co.

MANDELBAUM, D.
1940 The Plains Cree. American Museum of Natural History, Anthropology Papers 37.2.

VIII. Appendix

Woman A

* Obedience to father to be the essential role in a woman.
* Deep respect for father and brothers required by all women of the family; the daughters reached adult stage by their behavioural development and achieved complete adulthood at the time of puberty.
* The respect for the father and brothers was shown in various expected ways:
  - a female never slaps the face of a male;
  - clothing, particularly hats, never to be stepped on by a woman;
  - never to rest one's self on the bedding of father or brother;
  - never walk or pass behind father's or brother's back whether the two are standing or sitting;
  - never use profanity in presence of males.
* The woman has a definite role of behaviour and must observe all expected norms in relation to womanhood.
  - A woman, like a teepee, is the nucleus of a family, and therefore she is responsible for the personal and physical development of her children, not through punishment, but through love, for the children which she has borne are not hers but rather are lent to her by the Great Spirit.
  - Puberty begins womanhood and many observances are required; during the first four day observance where the girl is completely isolated from everyone except for the elderly woman who would initiate her into her observance, the girl is required to do all household chores from sunrise to sunset; the concept of sunrise and sunset are of most importance, as the girl must be up at sunrise and must retire by sunset; she does not touch her hair for four days for she will shorten her life and her hair will not grow; she does not use the mirror for she will be vain; she does not cry for her eyes will remain red [contrary to Mandelbaum's statement that 'a girl is expected to cry a great deal (Mandelbaum 1940:244)]; she does not look at a man for she will be promiscuous; she is not to be near elders for they will lose their spiritual powers; she is not to be in a vicinity where medicine is being made for the medicine does not have healing power; she is not to participate in any ceremonials (spiritual) for the ceremony wil not be effective.
* A woman never dances the powwow like they do now; the only ceremonies a woman participates in is the sundance (if not menstruating) or the round dance, including the owl dance.
* A woman can never be a server at a feast, but must learn how to organize a feast and the ritual of cooking for a

feast.
* A woman never cuts her hair for it is her life line, and never throws strands of her hair outdoors in the garbage for fear a snake would wrap itself, allowing the woman to develop headaches at a later age, or in old age.
* A woman does not value her role as someone who brings pleasure to a man.
* A woman cannot put up a sundance; if she has had a vision, she chooses her husband or eldest son, or brother.
* A woman has to marry the man chosen by her parents.
* The role of the woman has changed so much; we have lost our way of life and will destroy our lives when our cultural beliefs are gone.

Woman B
* The woman married the man the parents chose.
* The woman had to respect father and brother and other male members of her family.
* The woman grows her hair because it is her life.
* A woman must observe all she must do during menstruation: not to go to ceremonies, not to ride horses, or do any physical activity, not to cry the first time, not to make fun of anything or anyone while pregnant or her unborn child will acquire the characteristics she makes fun of, not to be embarrassed of her pregnancy for her child will be covered with hair.
* The woman should never abuse a man physically, like slapping his face, for she is not of worth to slap a man, especially an elder.
* A woman must behave like a woman at all times in order to deserve respect.

Woman C
* A woman must respect father and brothers.
* A woman is taught from childhood how to behave.
* The most important training is at puberty: she learns the role of life, mother, and women, during the first four secluded days of menstruation.
* A woman cannot participate in many ceremonies because the elders lose spiritual power (if a woman is menstruating).
* A woman cannot abuse pregnancy and children, for these are not her own.
* A woman cannot commit suicide.
* A woman must observe her sexual role to bring pleasure to the man to whom she is committed.
* Parents make the choice of husband, and she cannot refuse.
* A woman does not ridicule anyone, especially during pregnancy, or the baby will look like who she ridicules.

* A woman does not powwow, except for owl dance, round dance.

Woman D

* A woman is trained to respect father, brothers, uncles and men in general.
* A woman does not slap her father, brother, or husband.
* A woman must learn to be a wife and mother during the puberty observance--she lives with an elderly woman and does not touch her hair, ride horses, or go to ceremonies when she is menstruating.
* A woman must obey her father even in an arranged marriage.
* A woman does not participate in powwows like they do now.
* A woman marries the man her parents chose for her.
* A woman does not hurt her children or other living things, trees, animals.

Woman E

* A woman obeys her father and shows respect for her brothers, when young brothers did not speak to sisters.
* A woman becomes a woman at puberty time and begins her role as a woman--chores, care of children.
* A woman never slaps her brother or husband.
* A woman does not attend ceremonies when menstruating.
* A woman never commits abortion because the fetus will suffocate her at her death bed.
* A woman does not commit suicide because her soul will wander and suffer until her death time.
* A woman cares for her husband with very much care, even doing most chores.
* A woman never hits her children or hurts animals.
* A woman does not make fun of anyone or abuse any creature for any abuse she freely uses will be upon her and her children.

Woman F

* A woman learns to obey her father and brothers or any males in the family, even the adoptive family she may have.
* Her gifts from the spirit are in her womanhood, and she should never abuse it: no promiscuity, no abortions, and no medicine to prevent pregnancy.
* The most important time of her life is her menstrual time and she must go through all these duties:
  - to be isolated for four days and nights;
  - to do all household chores from morning till night;
  - not to comb own hair, for she is not to touch hair;
  - not to cry because her eyes will remain red all her life;

- not to look at herself in the mirror because she will be vain;
- not to look at males because she will be promiscuous.

.

Woman G

* A woman has a special role in her life and she has been raised to live the way it is expected of her to do.
* The first things a woman learns is how she is related to other people and that she must behave and act accordingly to each relative.
* She learns to respect and obey her father and if she keeps this respect and obedience she will earn herself a long life.
* She learns to respect and behave the expected way towards her brothers, male cousins, and uncles, even not to touch the hats of these mentioned.
* If her father chooses a husband for her she has not choice but to marry.
* She must not abuse her pregnancy or the fetus will not let her at peace.
* She must not hurt her children because these children are not really hers.
* She must not favor one child more than the others because that child will die soon.
* She must not abuse any living creatures.
* She must not make fun of anyone because she will curse her children.
* She must know when and what ceremonies she can attend. She must not attend ceremonies when she is menstruating. The first time she menstruates she has to take her real training as a woman: she has to live with an old woman for four days. She learns to sew, clean, wash and cook. She cannot touch her hair because she will shorten her life. She cannot look at her face in the mirror because she will be proud (vain). She cannot look at boys or men because she will be an easy woman. She cannot ride horses or play when she is menstruating. She must never enter the sundance lodge when she is menstruating.
* She must never be ashamed of her pregnancy for her child will be covered with hair. She cannot eat certain things like kidneys, for her child will be a bedwetter, a nose, for her child will have a big nose, nor ears, for her child will have big ears.
* She must be ready to love the man she commits herself to--virginity is not of importance, but to be sexually skillful is very important.
* She must obey her father even in married life.
* She does not have to remain with her husband if either cannot bear any more children, for the woman is destined to have children.

Woman H

* She must respect her father, brothers, and all men relations.
* She learns her woman's role when she menstruates for the first time. She cannot cry because her eyes will remain red all her life; she cannot comb her own hair, because she shortens her life and her hair will not grow; she cannot look at men; she must get up at sunrise; she has to do sewing, cleaning, washing, and clean up herself real good.
* She cannot give herself or have an abortion because the baby will not give her peace or she will have a sickly child if and when she finally has a child.
* She cannot take medicine to stop having children.
* She cannot touch or step over her father's or brother's hats or clothes.
* She cannot go into the sundance lodge or tea dance if she is menstruating.
* She must obey her father all the time even if he gives her away in marriage.
* She must be good to her husband all the time and never slap a man on the face.
* She cannot be ashamed if she is pregnant.
* She does not have to be a virgin.
* She cannot stop from having children because every child she should have had will be with her when she dies.
* She cannot make fun of people or animals because she and her children will look like what she made fun of.
* She cannot eat some foods when she is pregnant because different foods will effect her child differently, like if she eats kidneys or an animal her child will be a bedwetter, and so forth.
* She must always have long hair, for hair is her lifeline.
* She cannot marry or wear bright coloured clothes for a year after her husband's death, unless it is a brother of her dead husband, and then she may marry again before the year is up.

Woman I

* A woman has to obey and respect her father and do what he wants, even after marriage. If the father is deceased she may adopt a father for herself, or her oldest brother may take the father's place.
* A woman becomes a woman when she menstruates the first time. She has to learn how to cook, sew, wash, and clean up. She can't look in the mirror and she can't look at men. She is ready for being a mother.
* A woman cannot be ashamed of her pregnancy because her child will be covered with hair. She cannot eat certain foods like animal parts because her baby will have large ears or nose, and so on.
* A woman cannot get rid of her pregnancy or she cannot

commit suicide because she puts lets herself to the wanderers' spirit world.

* A woman is made to have children and she can't hurt her children for her children are only lent to her by the Great Spirit, and the way she cares for them allows her the type of place she will have in the spirit world.
* A woman does not make fun of any person's appearance or affliction, or the ridicule she makes can be turned against her or her children.
* A woman does not go into the sundance lodge or any other spiritual ceremony if she is menstruating, or the spiritual powers of the elder of the ceremony will not be effective.
* One of the old traditions that is not recorded or ever talked about is that a woman never eats with the men she cooked for, nor with the children, except the eldest sons, for even a seven year old eldest son bears an adult status in the presence of men.
* A woman cannot speak to her brothers, and brothers and sisters don't speak to each other except when young (and this was very strictly observed once).
* A girl must never speak to her own brothers and a man must never talk to his sisters. When your sisters are young, you can play with them, but when they are about ten years old you must quit. Your sisters look after your moccasins and clothes, but they never talk to you. If necessary, you might say one or two words to your sister, but she would never reply. Suppose you came home hungry and only your sister is there: you can let her know that you want something to eat. She prepares the food and leaves the teepee. If another girl is present she can stay until you finish eating. The first time I ever talked with my sisters was when I visited their reserve not long ago and they were very old.
* A woman has to know the kinship relationships, for these form their behaviour towards their many relatives; if a woman does not know these, she may get many embarrassing experiences.

Woman J

* My life as an Indian woman has made me a respectable woman.
* I learned many things like how to sew, cook, clean and keep house very early when I menstruated for the first time.
* I have to obey my father all the time.
* I was taught these things:
  - never to hurt my children or animals or plants,
  - never slap a man's face,
  - never to have an abortion,
  - never to take birth control
  - never to swear at men,
  - never to go to ceremonies during my periods,

- never to cut my hair and always to dress like a woman.

* I learned that if I respect my parents I would have a long life.
* I learned never to favour one child because I would lose him or her to death or disease.
* I learned I had to be a good wife to any man whom I chose to live with or whom my father may pick for me.
* I learned never to ride horses or to play when I was menstruating.
* I learned what animals to be aware of, and what animals were of good fortune: owl, bad omen; yellowbird, good health.
* I learned to read the moon to tell weather for the next day.
* I learned to read plants for what the next season would be like.
* I learned how to make medicine from what roots.
* I learned how to make feast food, and which would go to the elders, the adults, and the children.
* I learned it was my duty to dress any deceased member of my family.
* I learned that if I lived what I had been taught I would live a free life.

Woman K

* As a girl I learned many things of how I would behave all my life.
* I learned the different kinships, and how I would behave toward each relative.
* I learned the respect and obedience to my parents, so I would have a long life.
* I learned the way I would never have to hurt my children and all living things because as a woman I gave life.
* I learned the way I became a real woman with my menstrual observance: I couldn't cry, I couldn't wash, comb or touch my hair; I couldn't speak to anyone; I had to get up at sunrise and go to bed at sunset; I had to do all the work.
* I learned I would never have an abortion or take medicine not to have a child.
* I would never commit suicide.
* I had to respect my brothers, uncles; and never touch or step over any man's clothing, especially hats, and never to slap the face of a man.
* I had to be skillfull in bed to please the man I was to live with.
* I had to know what roots made what medicine.
* I had to know what ceremonies I could go to and when.
* I learned to tell time, whether from nature like plants, moon, sun.
* I had to learn what to eat and what not to eat when I was pregnant, and never to make fun of people, animals,

or things.

Woman L

* The woman has changed a lot since I was young.
* The girl had to do so much learning about the Indian way of life.
* She lived with an old woman when she menstruated the first time. There was so much to learn: not to cry, not to wash or comb the hair, not to look in the mirror, not to look at or speak to boys; to cook, to sew, to clean, to wash and to iron clothes.
* Later the girl had to learn when to go to ceremonies or feasts.
* A woman learns not to touch father's or brothers' hats, at all times; not to commit suicide; not to swear when father is around; not to play games.
* When married she had to follow so many rules:
  - to be good in bed;
  - to have children;
  - not to take medicine (birth control);
  - not to cause miscarriage;
  - not to be mean to children and animals.,

Woman M

* Times have really changed for the Indian women; life used to be so strict.
* The girl became a woman when she first menstruated. She lived with an old woman the first four days and nights; she learned to cook, sew, and clean; she didn't touch her hair; she didn't cry, because she will have red eyes all her life; she didn't see herself in the mirror because she would become proud; she didn't speak to boys or men because she'll become a bad woman; she didn't lazy around for she will remain lazy.
* She obeys her father all the time.
* She doesn't take medicine against pregnancy, and when she's pregnant she is not be ashamed.
* She is not to hurt or favor her children.
* She doesn't touch her father's or brother's hats.
* She doesn't attend any spiritual ceremonies or touch the pipe when she is menstruating nor does she touch sacred bundles when she is menstruating.
* The girl does not cut her hair; she is supposed to have long hair so she can have a long life.
* The girl must obey and respect her parents and she will live long.
* The girl doesn't hurt any living thing, people, animals, or plant life because she is a giver of life.
* The girl doesn't ride horses or play games when menstruating.
* The girl learns how to prepare feasts, learning what foods are the first served to the elders, but she can

never be a server herself.
* I live with all my beliefs and I am able to behave the way I was taught to behave.

Woman N (Responses partly in Cree and partly in English, Questionnaire only in Cree)
* The girl becomes a woman when she gets her periods for the first time.
* She learns all household chores.
* She learns some culture, like not to do her hair and not to cry.
* She doesn't communicate with boys or anyone except her grandma.
* She doesn't go to any ceremonies when she's got her periods, or feasts, except the one when she's finished her periods.
* She always respects her father and brothers.
* She doesn't give herself a miscarriage and she doesn't use birth control.
* She doesn't kill herself or hurt any living animals.
* She doesn't hit or hurt her children because they are not hers, really, and she doesn't have a favourite child because that child will die.
* She obeys her father even when she has a husband, and she's supposed to be good sexually for her husband.
* She never slaps a man on the face because she's not supposed to be worth slapping a man.
* To complete her marriage commitment to her husband a woman is supposed to make a pair of moccasins for her husband.
* I think if all Indian women lived with the cultural beliefs we were raised on there wouldn't be so many neglected homes now.

Woman O (Responses on in English, Questionnaire in Cree, but some English)
* A girl spends first time with grandmother when she menstruates.
* She cleans and cooks.
* She doesn't do her hair.
* She doesn't cry.
* She doesn't look outdoors or at boys.
* She doesn't do sports like horseback riding, swimming and P.E. classes.
* She doesn't cry.
* She has to be very clean.
* She has to respect her father and brothers, uncles.
* She doesn't fool around with guys' hats.
* She doesn't take birth control or get an abortion, because she will see her dead baby just before she dies.
* She doesn't commit suicide because her soul would wander around till it is her time to die; her soul would suffer

the same as a human body would.
* She doesn't hit her children or hurt animals.
* She doesn't destroy plant life for nothing.
* She doesn't use medicine for not having children.
* She has to do what her father tells her to do even if she has to marry the guy she has been chosen for.
* She doesn't make jokes about how people look or she doesn't watch animals suffer.
* She doesn't touch the pipe, or go to sun dance and any ceremonies when she has her periods.
* If her father dies she doesn't cry if she has been obedient to him.
* I believe all these things and I think my attitude is so different from those girls who say everything is superstitious.

Woman P (Responses in English only, Questionnaire in Cree with some English)
* A girl becomes a woman when she menstruates.
* She lives with an older woman the first time she menstruates.
* She cooks, sews, bakes, cleans and doesn't touch her hair.
* She doesn't cry.
* She doesn't look at guys.
* She doesn't use the mirror.
* She respects her father, if she has one; if none, then her grandpa.
* She doesn't take birth control.
* She doesn't get an abortion.
* She doesn't commit suicide.
* She doesn't fool around with some relatives, and I know which ones.
* She doesn't eat some junk food when she's pregnant.
* She doesn't sleep a lot if she's pregnant.
* I don't know why I must do all these things but I will be told when the time comes; when I'm older, I guess.

LEARNING THE CREE LANGUAGE

by

GRACE MARIE SWAMPY

Preface

In the following lessons you will be learning the basics of the Plains Cree language and culture.

The most important aspect of the Plains Cree language is its use of animate and inanimate meanings. In learning the sounds and structures of Cree, you will note that there is a distinct difference to learning the English language. To learn Cree means to involve yourself constantly in the practice of many skills, listening and pronouncing distinct Cree sounds, forming Cree words, using popular Cree phrases, and using specific sentences in any given setting.

The difficulties faced by Cree speakers when learning English will be understood much more easily once you have tried to learn our language.

Lesson 1

Before you start learning the Plains Cree language, it is important to know that there are four other Cree dialects. These dialects differ in a few sounds, and in some words, but these differences are not major, once you have mastered one dialect. In becoming a fluent speaker in one dialect, you will easily recognize another dialect. The dialects of Cree are

Dialect	Example (Meaning "I")
Plains Cree	neya
Swampy Cree	nena
Woods Cree	nedha
"R" Cree	nera
Moose Cree	nela

For each lesson in the following course, there will be some cultural beliefs or traditions explained so that your learning of the Cree language will be more meaningful.

The Cree language uses the following alphabet:

a c e h i k m n o p s t u w y.

The consonants "k", "a" and "h" are used most commonly.

The consonants "m" and "n" are nasal sounds.

The consonant "k" is a gutteral sound.

The consonant "t" does not have the English "t" sound,

but rather is a blend between an English "d" and "t" sound.

The consonant "p" is also a blend between a "p" and a "b" sound.

There are no "th" and "sh" blends in the Cree language.

The vowels are as follows.

	Cree	English
a	awas (go away)	car
a	masinahikun (book)	cut
e	michet (many)	pain
i	nistoo (three)	knee
o	kokum (grandma)	foot
o	moswa (moose)	bone
y	asay (already)	boy
w	kisikaw (day)	cow

The following phrases are common phrases used daily, perhaps the most common conversational phrases in the Cree language.

Tansi-asikasoyin?

(What is your name?)

Tanta-toh-poinayin?

(How old are you?)

Tante-awekeyin?

(Where do you live?)

Tante-ohchi-keya?

(Where do you come from?)

Awenkik-ke-ne-kekwakik?

(Who are your parents?)

Tante-a-atoskeyan?

(Where do you work?)

Tansi?

(How are you?)

Tansi-ke-tah-mah-chi-hoin?

(How do you feel?)(When a person has been or is ill.)

Kenoh-tay-ka-tan-chi?

(Are you hungry?)

Kenas-toh-sin chi? or

Anastohsiyin-chi?

(Are you tired?)

A-nohtah-kwa-siyin-chi?

Kenohtay-kwa-sin?

(Are you sleepy?)

A-ke-soh-wasiyin chi?

Ke-ke-so-was-in?

(Are you angry?)

Ohtanak-chi awetohtayin?

(Are you going to town?)

Awena?	(Who?)
Tante?	(Where?)
Tanispik?	(When?)
Kekwayah?	(What?)
Tana-kik?	(Why?)
Tansi? (or) Tansi-maka?	(How?)

Cultural Awareness

An individual does not ask an elderly person what his name is. The elder will volunteer his name or will be introduced by another. To ask his name is to insult him. Respect for the elderly is the basis of Cree teaching. A Cree child is taught very early in life that if he/she respects elders and parents, he/she earns himself/herself a longer life.

Activity 1

1. Write and pronounce the following words in Cree

what where when how why

2. Translate the following Cree words into English.

awena tante tanakik tansispik tansi

3. Translate the following Cree phrases into English.

Tansi-asikasoyin?

Tanta-tohpoinayin?

Tante awekeyin?

Tante a atoskeyan?

Tante ohchi-keya?

4. What sound does the Cree consonant "t" use?

5. What sound does the Cree consonant "p" use?

6. What Cree consonants use nasal sounds?

7. What Cree consonant produces a gutteral sound?

8. How does the Cree cultural concept dictate that an

Elder is introduced?

Activity II

1. Review all consonants used in the Cree alphabet.
2. Review and write the given introductory phrases.
3. Review orally all Cree words from Lesson 1.
4. State any questions you would like clarified from Lesson 1 for review.

Lesson 2

The following lesson teaches you how to count in Cree.

1 peyak

2 neso

3 nisto

4 neyo

5 neyanan

6 nikotwasik

7 tepakohp

8 ayinaneyo

9 kekamitahtaht

10 mitahtaht

11 peyakosap

12 nesosap

13 nistosap

14 neyosap

15 niyanosap (notice difference)

16 nikohtwas-sap (notice difference)

17 tepakohp-sap

18 ayinaneyo-sap

19 kekatch nestanaw

20 nestanaw

In learning the rest of the numerals to 100 and

beyond, the same format is used as in the numbers 11 to 20, with the next "tens" term changed, as in the following.

30 nistomtanaw

40 neyomtanaw

50 niyanomtanaw

60 nikotwasomtanaw

70 tepakohpomtanaw

80 ayinaneyomtanaw

90 kekamitahtahtomtanaw

100 mitahtahtomtanaw

There are two variations of counting once you reach 20 and beyond; for example, 21 is "nestanaw-peyakosap" or "nestanaw mena peyak." "Nestanaw-peyakosap" logically would mean to be "20 and 11," giving "31," but the "peyakosap" denotes "one more added to the prefix twenty."

"Nestanaw mena peyak" means "twenty and one," and this has become common usage for many Cree speakers.

To continue counting into the hundreds, the format used is still the same as from 1 to 19, with the hundredth numeral preceeding. For example, "200" is "nesaw-mitahtahtomtanaw." To say "201," you would say "nesaw-mitahtahtomtanaw mena peyak."

300 nistaw mitahtahtomtanaw

400 neywaw mitahtahtomtanaw

500 niyanaw mitahtahtomtanaw

600 nikotwasaw mitahtahtomtanaw

700 tepakohpow mitahtahtomtanaw

800 ayinaneywaw mitahtahtomtanaw

900 kekamitahtahtomtanaw

1000 mitahtahtomtanaw mitahtahtomtanawaw

In everyday conversational Cree, exact descriptions are rarely used. The terms "peyak" (meaning "one") or "mihcet" ("many") are often used to denote number. Even the term "peyak" is rarely used in this manner, unless one needs to be very specific; a singular noun is usually used to denote singularity, and the meaning is quite clear (for example. "atim," meaning "one dog").

Activity 1

1. Write the following numerals in Cree.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

2. Translate these Cree numerals into English.

neso _____

neyo _____

tepakohp _____

mitahtat _____

peyak _____

3. Write a suffix to the following Cree numerals to denote numerals in "tens" units.

peyak _____

neso _____

nisto _____

neyo _____

niyanan _____

Activity II

1. Review orally numerals in Cree from 1 to 20, noting the difference in pronouncing and form of numerals 15, 16 and 19.
2. What unit does "o-sap" represent?
3. What unit does "tanaw" represent?
4. Are specifics in numerals important in the Cree culture?

Lesson 3

The following lesson will teach you how to tell time in Cree. The concept of time, divided so rigourously, is fairly new with the Cree language, for in earlier times there was no scheduled time of day. The earlier times of Cree society knew the approximate time of the day through the sun's position.

The word for "hour" is "tepahikun."

The word for "minute" is "tepahikunis."

The numeral system from 1 to 12 will be used.

The words "after," "before" and "half" will be used.

Here is your initial glossary:

clock	pisimokan (means "sun-like")
after	meyaskum
before	meyas
half	apetaw

Thus,

one o'clock	peyak tepahikun
ten to one	mitahtaht tepahikunis meyas peyak tepahikun
ten after one	mitahtaht tepahikunis meyaskum peyak tepahikun

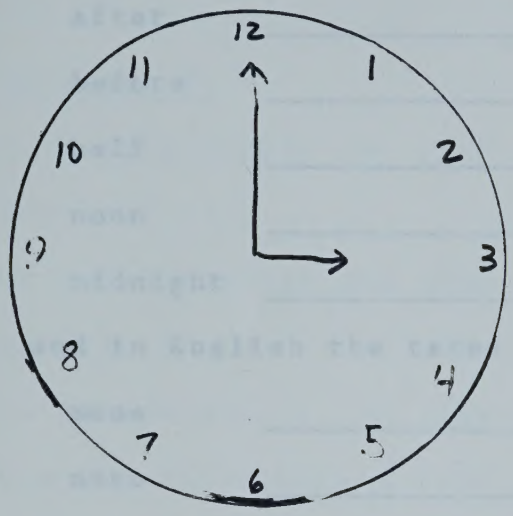
one thirty peyak mena apetaw tepahikun

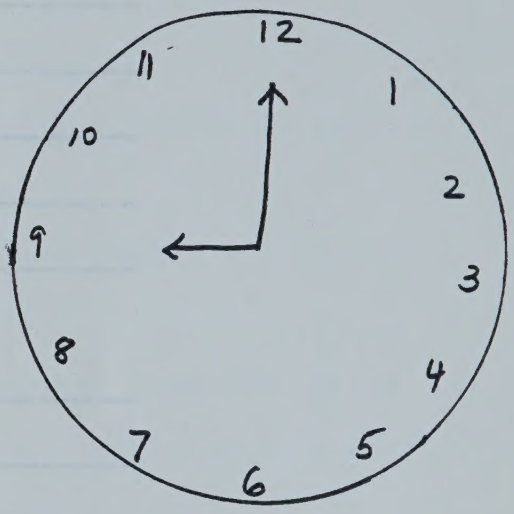
Once you have learned to count in Cree, telling time in Cree will be easier. The terms for "noon" and "midnight" are literally translated to "half day" and "half night"; "noon" is "apetaw kisikaw" and "midnight" is "apetaw tipiskaw".

The concept of morning and night are significant in the Cree culture. The morning is a time of spiritual meditation even if in just a pausing of a minute, usually silently. The night holds much more of cultural teaching. Children are taught not to cry at nights, or they will summon spirits. They are told not to play outdoors for they are enticing spirits to join thier play and lead them away. The female members learn not to leave food and soiled dishes out at night, for the spirits will enter their kitchens. A child learns not to look out into the night for he will see whatever spirits are out there. Anthropological studies have stated that the native children are raised permissively with no disciplinary rules and regulations, yet each child learns disciplines with traditional beliefs, as above.

Activity I

1. At the bottom of each clock, pictured below, write the time in Cree.





2. Write in Cree the terms for

hour _____

minute _____

after _____

before _____

half _____

noon _____

midnight _____

and in English the terms for

mena _____

neso _____

neso-sap _____

3. Write in Cree the following times.

9:00 _____

1:00 _____

12·00 _____

3:30 _____

2:00 _____

6:00 _____

4:30 _____

7:00 _____

10:30 _____

5:00

4. What Cree word would you use to denote "a.m." in

telling time?

5. What Cree word would you use to denote "p.m." in telling time?

Activity II

1. Review orally the time from one o´clock to twelve o´clock.

2. Review orally the time from one thirty to twelve thirty.

3. Review orally the time before the hour and after the hour, using numerals from 1 to 30, e.g.. 1:15 a.m., 1:15 p.m.

4. Why are day and night significant in the Cree cultural concept?

Lesson 4

The following lesson will teach you words pertaining to days, weeks, and months. The days of the Week:

Sunday	Ayamehew-kisikaw
Monday	Pooni-Ayamehew-kisikaw
Tuesdsay	Neso-kisikaw
Wednesday	Nisto-kisikaw
Thursday	Neyo-kisikaw
Friday	Niyan-kisikaw
Saturday	Nikotwas-kisikaw

Other terms

Night	tipiskaw
Day	kisikaw
Afternoon	apetah-kisikaw
After midnight	apetah-tipiskaw
Morning	kaksapah
It´s morning	wapan; a wahpak
Evening	A otahkosik
Week	ayamehew kiskikaw
One week	peyak ayamehew kisikaw
Year	askiy
Month	pisim

One month	peyak pisim
today	anoch
tomorrow	wapahkik
yesterday	otaskosik

Months of the Year

January	Kiso-Pisim
February	Mikkso-Pisim
March	Niski-Pisim
April	Ayiki-Pisim
May	Sahkepakaw-Pisim
June	Paskaho-Pisim
July	Pasko-Pisim
August	Ohpahho-Pisim
September	Nochito-Pisim
October	Kuskatinaw-Pisim
November	Ekope-Pisim
December	Papahwechakenasis

The names for the months of the year signify the natural phenomena of both plant and animal life as well as of climate.

Each month denotes the significance of occurence which indicates "respect for life." The teachings in the Cree culture to respect all aspects of "living"

demands priority. Every living or life-giving thing must have respect of the individual. Cruelty to any "living" thing brings upon personal infliction. Whatever infliction one causes a "living" thing, the same infliction will be suffered by the individual during the course of his/her life.

Activity I

1. Translate the following days of the week in Cree.

Sunday _____

Monday _____

Tuesday _____

Wednesday _____

Thursday _____

Friday

Saturday

2. Translate the following Cree words into English.

kiskikaw _____

tipiskaw _____

kaksapah _____

otahkosin _____

pisim _____

anoch _____

wahpahkik _____ _____

otahkosik _____

apetaw-kisikaw _____

apetah-tipiskaw _ _____

3. Write in Cree

It is morning. _____

It is evening. _ _

It is night. _____

It is noon. _____

Activity II

1. Review orally the months of the year in Cree.
2. Review from notes the meaning of each month accordingly.
3. Why is each month significant in the Cree culture?

Lesson 5

The following lesson will teach you Cree words pertaining to climate and natural phenomena.

sunny	sahkastew
it´s sunny	a sahkastek
cold	kesin
it´s cold	a kesik
rain	kimowan
it´s raining	a kimowak
hot (day)	kestew
it´s hot	a kestak
snow	kona
it´s snowing	a mispok; mispon
wind	utin
it´s windy	a utik
heavy rainfall	mese-kimowan
sleet	asisiwak
dry climate	apastak
wet climate	a sahpak
spring	meoskamik
summer	nepin
it´s spring	a meoskamik
it´s summer	a nepik

autumn	tahkwakin
it´s autumn	a tahkwakik
winter	pipoon
it´s winter	a pipok
moonlight	nepayastew
northern lights	anemehihtohchik
clouds	ekwaskwana
it´s cloudy	a ekwaskwak
sun	pisim
moon	tipiskaw pisim
star	achakos
stars	achakosak
thunder	aketohchik; ketohwak
lightning	waskochapayis
blizzard	pewan
it´s a blizzard	apewak; apewaneotik
tornado	pastohsiwan

The cultural belief of "northern lights" has a version that this natural phenomenon is actually the deceased spirits dancing in the heavens, and an individual learns to respect this phenomenon and learns never to whistle at northern lights, for it is a form of disrespect and the northern lights will come closer at the sound of a whistle. Perhaps much more reinforcement

into the spirituality of the culture.

Activity I

1. Write in Cree the following terms.

sunny _____

cold _____

rain _____

snow _____

wind _____

spring _____

autumn _____

summer _____

winter _____

sleet _____

2. Write in English the following Cree words.

a sahkastak _____

a kesik _____

a kestak _____

a mispok _____

a utik _____

3. Write in Cree using words from previous lessons.

one day _____

one week _____

cold day _____

windy night _____

summer eveing _____

rainy year _____

cold winter _____

windy Sunday _____

sunny autumn _____

moonlight _____

Activity II

1. Review orally all Cree words in Lesson 5.

2. State any questions you would like information on regarding Lesson 5.

Lesson 6

The following lesson will teach you the personal pronouns used in Cree. You will note that there is no distinction between "he" and "she." This is one of the reasons why a Cree speaker learning English as a second language has difficulty in using the proper form differentiating gender.

neya	I, my, me. mine
keya	you, your, yours
weya	he, his, him, she. her, hers
neyanan	us, we, our, ours
keyanaw	us, we, our, ours
keyawaw	you (plural)
weyawaw	them, their, theirs

Using terms such as "me too":

nesta	I, me too
kesta	you too
westa	her, him too
nestanan	we, us too
kestawaw	you too

westawaw they, them too

The word "keyananaw" in the first person plural denotes a group of people with the speaker excluding himself, whereas the word "neyanan" denotes the inclusion of the speaker.

The word "personal" is a very significant one in the Cree culture. The philosophical thought behind this significance is that an individual is gifted with "life, reasoning, and sincerity," and how one uses these is how one's life is destined. The philosophical teaching that accompanies this thought is that of a decaying yet living tree. An individual lives as the tree does, as he is a functional being, yet this "functioning" slowly decays if he abuses his being in any form, thus allowing total decay to consume his "life, reasoning, and sincerity;" leaving a non-functioning being to live as he pleases.

Activity I

1. Write in Cree the following words.

mine _____

you _____

your _____

my _____

us _____

we _____

their _____

her _____

his _____

them _____

2. Write in English the following Cree words.

neya _____

nesta _____

westa _____

weyawaw _____

keya _____

weya _____

nestanan _____

neyanan _____

westawaw _____

keyanaw _____

3. Write in Cree the following terms.

Activity 1

1. Write in Cree the following words.

mine _____

you _____

your _____

my _____

us _____

we _____

their _____

her _____

his _____

them _____

2. Write in English the following Cree words.

nete _____

nesis _____

wetes _____

neyanaw _____

here _____

wete _____

nesenaw _____

neyanaw _____

wetinaw _____

keyanaw _____

3. Write in Cree the following names.

I _____

you _____

they _____

us _____

one _____

evening _____

three _____

summer _____

where _____

night _____

how _____ _____

spring _____

ten _____

them _____

day _____

rain _____

seven _____

when _____

twenty

cold

five

hour _____

before _____

yesterday _____

today _____

Activity II

1. Review orally all personal pronouns.

2. Review and know the difference in pronunciation of the terms, "us," "niyanan;" and the numeral "five," "niyanan."

3. What cultural significance is placed on the word "person"?

Lesson 7

The following lesson will teach you how to use colours in Cree.

red	amehkwak
green	asketahwak
blue	
black	akahsketahwak
white	awapiskak
orange	aohsawak
yellow	osaw
brown	aohsawnahkawk
faded	awahpastak

These are the basic colours in the Cree language. If you were to describe pastels you would use a basic colour with the suffix meaning "similar." For example, "off white" or "beige" would be "awpiskenawak," meaning "looks white;" the suffix "-nawak" meaning "similar."

Colour plays a significant part in religious ceremonies. Each colour denotes a specific cultural meaning in ceremonies, dances, and even in clothing. For example, a father and son might wear the same colour to denote the relationship; and an individual who has earned a name will be given a "colour" to denote the

signficance of his name.

Activity I

1. Write in Cree the following colours.

red _____

green _____

blue _____

black _____

brown _____

white _____

orange _____

yellow _____

Activity II

1. Review orally all colours used in Cree.

2. Why is colour significant?

Lesson 8

In the following four lessons you will learn the form of nouns in Cree. In Cree there are singular and plural nouns. As in English, the Cree nouns use endings that vary to denote singular or plural form. The usual plural endings of Cree nouns are "-wak," "-a" and "-aw."

In this lesson you will learn the nouns pertaining to the parts of the body, both in singular and plural form.

hair	maschakasah
head	mistikwan
heads	mistikwana
forehead	miskahtikwan
ear	metahwaka
ears	metahwakaya
eye	miskisik
eyes	miskisikwa
cheek	manohwa
cheeks	manohwaya
lip	mitoon
lips	mitoona
mouth	mitoon
chin	metapiskun

eyelashes	
eyebrows	miskisikoapeyah
eyelids	
nose	mikood, miskowan
nostrils	
skin	mahsakak
neck	mikwayaw
arms	mispitoona
elbows	metoskwana
hands	mechichiya
fingers	mechichisah
wrist	
shoulder	mehtihtihmon
breasts	mehtohtohsimak
chest	metohpiskun
stomach	mahtaey
back	mispiskwun
thighs	mehpohma
knees	mehchikwana
legs	miskatah
ankles	
feet	mistah
toes	misitsah
face	mehkwakun

body	meheyaw
bones	miskana
muscle	
fat	ween
tongue	mihtehyahne

In the Cree culture, the physical development of the body is not to be questioned nor abused. One of the most taught lessons regarding the body is to have the greatest respect of the body and to realize the most attractive part of the body as a special gift spiritually and to give it the best care. For example, if a person has unusually beautiful hands, then these hands deserve the best care that the person can possibly give. Another important lesson has been that one does not ridicule the appearance of another individual for whatever the cause of the other's affliction will come upon the one who ridicules. For example, a pregnant woman is taught never to make fun of another person, for that person's appearance will be seen on her baby.

Activity I

1. Write the following terms in Cree.

head _____

ears _____

eyes _____

mouth _____

chin _____

legs _____

feet _____

arms _____

face _____

hair _____

2. Write these terms in Cree.

one arm _____

red cheeks

black clock _____

two feet _____

ten toes _____

five fingers _____

one hand _____

when _____

where _____

yesterday _____

Activity II

Name: _____

Activity I

1. Write the following terms in Greek.

head _____

ears _____

eyes _____

mouth _____

chin _____

legs _____

feet _____

arms _____

face _____

hair _____

2. Write these terms in Greek.

one arm _____

red cheeks _____

black cloth _____

two feet _____

ten toes _____

five fingers _____

one hand _____

when _____

where _____

yesterday _____

Activity II

1. Review orally the Cree words for all parts of the body. Pronounce each word two or three times, remembering that Cree consonants must be distinctly sounded to get correct pronunciation.
2. Why is the cultural teaching of humanity so important?

Lesson 9

This will be a continuation of singular and plural nouns. The following nouns will deal with common items of clothing.

blouse	pihchones
shirt	pahkowayan
pants	mihtas
socks	ahsikanak
shoes	maskisina
boots (rubber)	pekewaskisina
cowboy boots	mostosiniwaskisina
jacket, coat or suit coat	miskotakay
suit	peyakawensah
nightgown	
slip	pehtahwasakun
bra	
panty	mechases
girdle	sehtahskwahoin
stockings	askikanahk
sweater or pullover	sehpakasakak
overalls	msiwatas
moccasins	pahkakinaskisina

buckskin coat	pahkakinesahkak
dance outfit	nehmehtohwasakaya
skirt	keskasahka
long coat	kenohpakasakak
fur coat	mehhawahsakak
rain coat	kimowanasakak
hat	astotin
police uniform	simahkanisiwasahkay
nurse´s uniform	maskikiiskwewasahkay
doctor´s uniform	maskikiwehenewasahkay
cook´s uniform	nawachiwasahkay
soldier´s uniform	simahkanisiwehkananwensah
priest´s uniform	ayameheweyenew awinisah
nun´s uniform	ayamehewiskwewawinisah
cowboy´s outfit	mostosiyenewawinsah
work clothes	atoskahwinawinisah

In describing clothing worn by professionals, the correct usage is to state "the clothes of a policemen."

In the cultural concept of clothing, a woman´s skills are shown by how clothing is seen on her husband, children and herself. Specific clothing are designed for sex roles, and are still very much in existence among the traditional families. Clothing of the deceased are also very significant.

Activity I

1. Write in Cree the following terms.

shirt _____

pants _____

coat _____

shoe _____

shoes _____

socks _____

sweater _____

hat _____

hats _____

blouse _____

2. Write in Cree the following.

one sock

four shoes _____

ten hats _____

red pants _____

white coat _____

five jackets _____

one skirt _____

black shirt _____

two red shoes _____

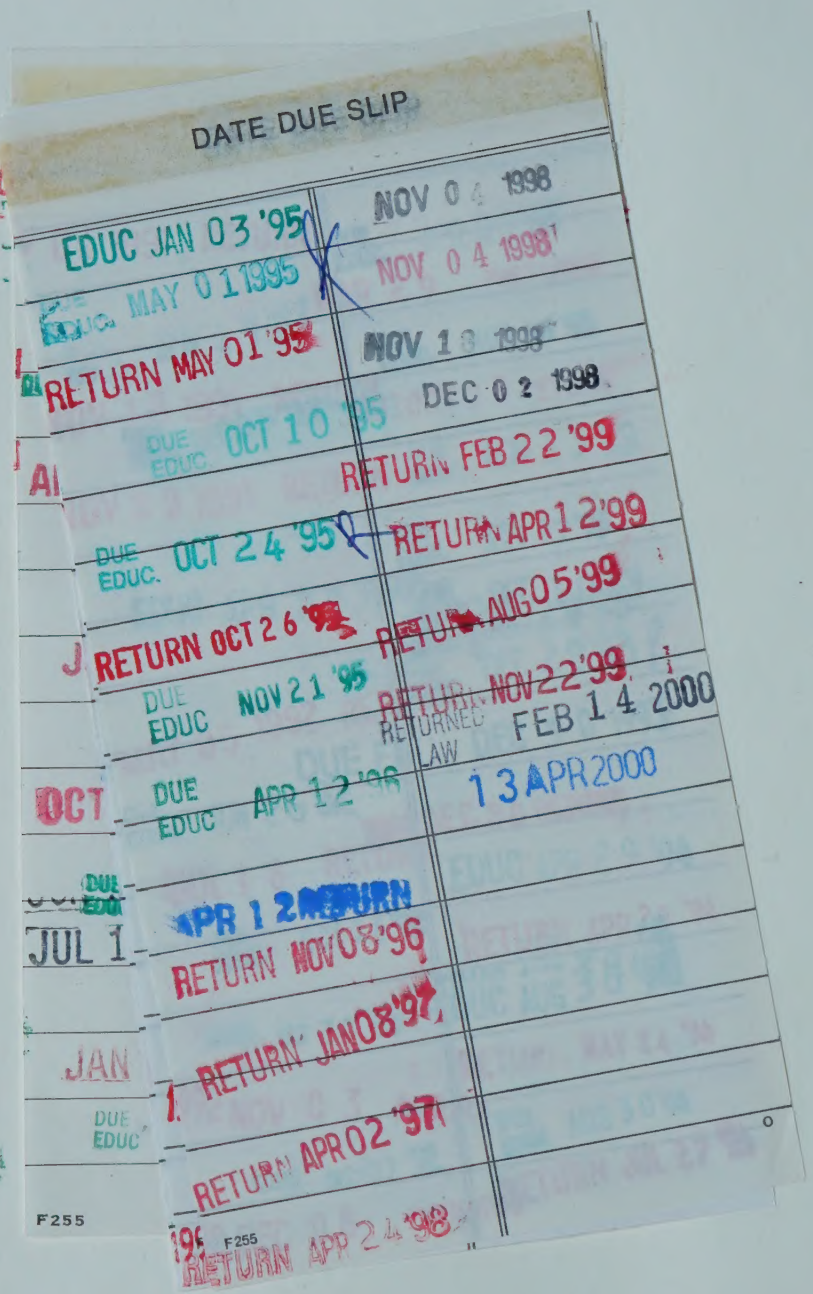
one rain coat _____

Activity II

1. Review orally in Cree all the items of clothing.

2. What cultural element is significant in terms of clothing?

3. State any questions you would like to ask regarding Lesson 9, for review.


DATE DUE SLIP
EDUC JAN 03 '95
RETURN MAY 01 '95
DUE EDUC OCT 10 '95
DUE EDUC. OCT 24 '95
RETURN OCT 26 '95
DUE EDUC NOV 21 '95
DUE EDUC APR 12 '96
JUL 1
RETURN NOV 08 '96
JAN
RETURN JAN 08 '97
RETURN APR 02 '97
F255
NOV 04 1998
NOV 04 1998
NOV 18 1998
DEC 02 1998
RETURN FEB 22 '99
RETURN APR 12 '99
RETURN AUG 05 '99
RETURN NOV 22 '99
RETURNED FEB 14 2000
LAW
13 APR 2000
RETURN APR 24 '98

JUL 1 ? 1987

E 99 C88 S97 1981
SWAMPY GRACE MARIE
THE ROLE OF NATIVE WOMEN IN A
PLAINS CREE SOCIETY AND
39890128 EDUC

000021508858

E 99 C88 S97 1981
Swampy, Grace Marie.
The role of native women in a
Plains Cree society ; and,
39890128 EDUC